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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An optical imaging system for reducing focus-related aberrations, comprising:
 - optics, including a wavefront coding-element, for imaging a wavefront of the imaging system to an intermediate image and for modifying phase of the wavefront such that an optical transfer function of the optical imaging system is substantially invariant to the focus-related aberrations induced, over time, by an intervening medium;
 - a detector for detecting the intermediate image; and
 - a decoder for processing data from the detector to process phase effects induced by the optics to form a final image that is substantially clear of the focus-related aberrations.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the aberrations comprise one or more of misfocus, spherical aberration, astigmatism, field curvature, chromatic aberration, temperature induced misfocus aberration, pressure induced misfocus aberration, trefoil and coma.
3. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, the wavefront coding element being configured to account for focus-related aberrations defined by Zernike polynomials.
4. (Original) The system of claim 1, the optics comprising one or more optical elements.
5. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 4, the wavefront coding element being integrated with the optical elements.
6. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 4, the wavefront coding element being integrated with one or more surfaces of the optical elements.

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7. (Original) The system of claim 4, the optical elements comprising adaptive optics.
8. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 7, the adaptive optics comprising the wavefront coding element.
9. (Original) The system of claim 8, the aberrations comprising one of piston error, quilting error and stuck actuator error.
10. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the wavefront coding element is positioned at one or more of a principal plane of the imaging system, an image of a principal plane of the imaging system, an aperture stop of the imaging system, and an image of the aperture stop.
11. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the intermediate image defines a modulation transfer function that has no zeros for detected spatial frequencies of the detector.
12. (Original) The system of claim 11, the decoder operable to restore each detected frequency of the wavefront in the final image.
13. (Original) The system of claim 1, the decoder being space variant to control aberrations comprising coma.
14. (Original) The system of claim 1, the decoder being dynamic to continually produce the final image while the aberrations vary, over time.
15. (Previously Presented) A task-based optical imaging system for reducing focus-related aberrations, comprising:
optics, including a wavefront coding element, for imaging a wavefront of the imaging system to an intermediate image and for modifying phase of the wavefront such that an optical transfer function of the optical imaging system is substantially invariant to the focus-related aberrations induced, over time, by an intervening medium; and

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a detector for detecting the intermediate image.

16. (Previously Presented) A method for reducing focus-related aberrations, comprising the steps of:

modifying an optical wavefront with a phase function to modify an optical transfer function of an optical system such that the optical transfer function at an intermediate image is substantially invariant to focus-related aberrations induced, over time, by a medium through which the optical wavefront propagates while being imaged by the optical system; and decoding data representative of the intermediate image to remove effects induced by the step of modifying to form a final image that is substantially free of the focus-related aberrations.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of modifying comprises the step of modifying according to Zernike polynomials which characterize the focus-related aberrations.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, the medium comprising air, the method being employed within lithography.

19. (Withdrawn) An imaging system for imaging acoustical waves through a medium, comprising:

an encoder for coding a wavefront of the acoustical waves propagating through the medium, the encoder being constructed and arranged to make the wavefront substantially invariant to acoustical aberrations caused by the medium;

an imager for imaging the wavefront; and

a decoder for reversing effects of the encoder coding to produce acoustical sounds substantially free of the aberrations.

20. (Previously Presented) An imaging system for reducing reflections from a detector, comprising:

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optics for imaging electromagnetic energy to the detector, the optics comprising a wavefront coding element for modifying phase of a wavefront imaged to the detector;

tilt optics having a tilt surface that tilts away from a plane perpendicular to the imaged electromagnetic energy, for reflecting back-scattered radiation to an aperture stop of the imaging system; and

a post processor for reducing distortion effects introduced by the reflections.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, the tilt optics being positioned at the aperture stop.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) The imaging system of claim 20, wherein the optics are constructed and arranged for coding the wavefront such that an optical transfer function of the imaging system is modified to be substantially invariant to focus-related aberrations, the post processor being configured to remove effects induced by the wavefront coded element on the wavefront.

24. (Previously Presented) A method for reducing optical distortions within an optical system employing adaptive optics, comprising the steps of:

modifying phase of a wavefront of the optical system with a wavefront coding element; and

post-processing image data of the optical system to remove phase effects induced by the wavefront coding-element, to control one or more of quilting, stuck actuator and piston error.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, the adaptive optics comprising a multi-segmented mirror.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of modifying comprises modifying phase such that no zeros exist in a modulated transfer function in the image data.

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27. (Withdrawn) An anti-reflection optical imaging system, comprising:
an optical detector; and
a wavefront coding element for reducing reflected power from electromagnetic radiation incident upon the optical detector.
28. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, the wavefront coding element operable within the system to produce a modulation transfer function, without zeros, for detected spatial frequencies of the optical detector.
29. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, further comprising a decoder for post-processing data from the detector to reverse effects induced by the wavefront coding element, to generate a final image.
30. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, further comprising a prism at an aperture within the system, to further reduce reflected power from the electromagnetic radiation.
31. (Withdrawn) A biometric optical recognition system, comprising:
optics, including a wavefront coding element, for imaging a wavefront of an object to be recognized to an intermediate image; and
a detector for detecting the intermediate image, wherein a modulation transfer function detected by the detector contains no zeros such that subsequent task based image processing recognizes the object.
32. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 31, further comprising a decoder, connected with the detector, for implementing the task based image processing.
33. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 32, the decoder operable as an all-pass filter in the frequency domain.
34. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 32, the decoder operable as an attenuation filter in the frequency domain for magnifications of one or less.
35. (Withdrawn) An optical imaging system, comprising:

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optics for imaging electromagnetic radiation to a detector;
tilt optics for reflecting back-scattered electromagnetic radiation from the detector
to an aperture stop of the imaging system; and
a post processor for processing data from the detector to remove aberrations
induced by the tilt optics.

36. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 35, the tilt optics being positioned at an aperture stop.

37. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 35, the optics comprising a wavefront coding element for modifying phase of a wavefront imaged to the detector, the post processor configured to remove effects induced by the wavefront coding element.

38. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 37, the wavefront coding element coding the wavefront such that an optical transfer function of the imaging system is substantially invariant to focus-related aberrations.

39. (Withdrawn) An optical imaging system, comprising:
optics for imaging electromagnetic radiation to a detector, the detector being tilted
with respect to an optical axis of the optics to direct back-scattered
electromagnetic radiation from the detector to an aperture stop of the
imaging system; and
a post processor for processing data from the detector to remove aberrations
induced by the tilt of the detector.

40. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 39, the optics comprising a wavefront coding element for modifying phase of a wavefront imaged to the detector, the post processor configured to remove effects induced by the wavefront coding element.

41. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 40, the wavefront coding element coding the wavefront such that an optical transfer function of the imaging system is substantially invariant to focus-related aberrations.